



TOMATO

Healthy Serving Hints

- ◆ Cherry and grape tomatoes taste great raw.
- ◆ Add slices to sandwiches and wraps.
- ◆ Make a quick salad of mozzarella, onion, tomato, and olive oil.
- ◆ Top a toasted baguette with diced tomatoes, basil, garlic, and olive oil for a bruschetta appetizer.
- ◆ Create an easy salsa with tomato, onion, bell peppers, and hot peppers. Make it guacamole by adding some avocado!

Home Grown History

Tomatoes can be traced back to the Andes Mountains in Peru. These tomatoes grew in the wild and were the size of cherries. The Incas and Aztecs began cultivating tomato plants as early as 700 A.D. The Spanish conquistadors brought tomato seeds with them back to Europe in the 1500's where they grew in popularity in Italy, Spain, and Portugal.



Tomato popularity was very slow to develop throughout the rest of Europe. Most people believed the food to be poisonous, likely due to it being a member of the nightshade family. This family includes a number of edible fruits, but many of the family's plants are highly poisonous. In fact, eating the stems and leaves of the tomato plants can cause illness and should be avoided. However, by the middle of the 18th century tomatoes were extensively being grown for food.

Tomato popularity gradually grew in the United States following the Europeans' use of it as a food. Thomas Jefferson was one of the first Americans to grow tomatoes at his Virginia home as early as 1781. By 1812, tomatoes were gaining in popularity among Louisiana Creoles who used them in jambalayas and gumbos and Maine cooks who added them to seafood dishes.

In the 1893 U.S. Supreme Court case of "Nix v. Hedden," the tomato was declared a vegetable, along with cucumbers, squashes, beans, and peas. This came about as a result of tariff laws in 1887, which imposed a duty on vegetables but not fruits.

Picking Produce

Select tomatoes that are rich in color – deep red, vibrant orange, or brilliant yellow. There should be no wrinkles, cracks, or soft spots. Ripe tomatoes will smell slightly sweet and yield to slight pressure.

This month, tomatoes were purchased from:

Zucchini Pizza

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 2 zucchinis, sliced in half length-wise
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 c mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 6 cherry tomatoes, sliced
- 1 Tbsp garlic powder
- 1 Tbsp oregano

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375° F.
2. Place zucchini skin down in 9"x13" pan and lightly brush with olive oil.
3. Sprinkle cheese on zucchini (¼ c per half) and top with garlic and oregano.
4. Place sliced tomatoes on top and bake for 20 minutes.
5. Serve while hot.



Health Benefits

Tomatoes are full of antioxidants, especially lycopene, which are protective against numerous types of cancers. Not to mention, they are great for vision, skin, and bone health due to their high concentrations of vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients. Research shows that eating tomatoes contributes to a much lower risk of heart disease, particularly by lowering cholesterol and triglyceride levels. There is no doubt that tomatoes will continue to rise towards the top of the list of heart-healthy foods.

Fun Facts

- ♦ Tomatoes gain weight as they ripen.
- ♦ The heaviest tomato ever grown weighed nearly 8lbs.
- ♦ There are 25,000 tomato varieties according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- ♦ 130 million tons of tomatoes are enjoyed worldwide each year.

How many vegetables do I need?

Children 2-3 years	Children 4-8 years	Females 9-13 years	Females 14-50 years	Females 51 + years	Males 9-13 years	Males 14-50 years	Males 51+ years
1 cup	1 ½ cups	2 cups	2 ½ cups	2 cups	2 ½ cups	3 cups	2 ½ cups

The amount of fruit and vegetables you need to eat depends on age, sex, and level of physical activity. These are average recommended daily amounts for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity. Individuals may require more or less than the recommended daily amounts depending on lifestyle and health conditions.



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